

1727

Repentance

The sure Way to ^{4486.a.74}

²
Escape Destruction.

TWO SERMONS

ON JER. 18. 7, 8.

Preach'd *December 21st*. on a Publick
Fast occasioned by the *Earthquake*
the Night after the LORD's-Day
Octob. 29th. And on the LORD's-
Day *December 24th*. 1727.

By *Joseph Sewall*, M. A.

Pastor of a Church of CHRIST in *Boston*.

Publi^hd with some Enlargement.

Ezek. 33. 11. *Say unto them, As I live
saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure
in the death of the wicked, but that the
wicked turn from his way and live : turn
ye, turn ye, from your evil ways ; for
why will ye die, O house of Israel.*

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GOD will not Destroy a Penitent People.

J E R. XVIII. 7, 8.

At what instant I shall speak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it : If that Nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil that I thought to do unto them.

IN this Chapter, 1. We have a Declaration of God's Sovereign Power to deal with a People as He pleaseth, under the Parable or Similitude of a Potter and his Clay, ver. 1,—6. If the Potter hath power over his fellow Clay to fashion it as he will ; surely that God, who hath given being to us and all Creatures, may dispose of us as seemeth good in His sight, Rom. 9.

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20, 1. Nay but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay — 2.

2. God shews that in his Dealings with Nations, He acts as a righteous Judge; yea as a God gracious and merciful, ver. 7, — 10. At what instant — God speaks against a People when He threatens to bring desolating Judgments upon them, and 'tis implied that this is for their Sins, whereby they transgress His holy Laws; This is the ground of the Controversy. Notwithstanding, we are here assur'd that tho' a sinful People give God cause to come out against them, so that if He should mark iniquity they could not stand; yet He is not wont to deal with them in a way of rigorous Justice; but first threatens and warns, before He comes out against them to destroy them: Yea, that if they take the Warning, and turn from the Evil of their Sins unto Him; God will also repent of the Evil of Punishment He threatned to bring upon them, and stay His Hand. Not as if God chang'd His Mind, or alter'd His Decree. No! He is the Almighty, All-wise, and Unchangeable God. *I am the Lord, I change not* — Mal. 3. 6. God is of one mind, and who can turn Him? God can do nothing but what is worthy of His infinite Perfections,

ons, and therefore He can't Repent in a strict and proper sense, 1 Sam. 15. 29. *The Strength of Israel will not Repent*— He is not a Man that He should Repent. However, God is said to Repent, speaking after the manner of Men, when He changeth His way, and the Course of His Providence towards a Person or People, Gen. 6. 6. Jon. 3. 10. Agreeably, the Expression here us'd intends that God would not execute the Judgments denounc'd, nor bring the threatned Evil upon them; but *e. c.* would return unto them in a way of Grace and Favour. On the other hand, God shews that His Promises of prospering and establishing a People are Conditional, ver. 9, 10. *If it do Evil, I will repent of the good* — God will stop the Course of His Mercies, and walk contrary to them. Now the due Observance of these Rules would help us to understand the Justice, Truth and Equity of God's Providential Dispensations towards His ancient People, and others. 3. We have the Improvement of the foregoing Discourse with an *especial Application* to God's Covenant People the Jews, ver. 11, —17. In which the *Prophet* is commanded to declare to the Men of *Judah*, that God was framing Evil against them; and then to call them to Repentance and Amendment of life, ver. 11. But their obstinacy in sinning is foretold.

and they are upbraided with their folly in forsaking their Covenant God, *ver. 13, — 15.*

4. We have an account of the People's desperate resolution to plot mischievous Devices against *Jeremiah*, because he faithfully delivered God's Message to them, *ver. 18. ad fin.* And then an Imprecation of Judgment, in which the Prophet was not acted by an evil spirit of personal Revenge: He desir'd not the woful Day; but by the Spirit of Prophecy.

BUT to return to the Text, from which, and as related to the Context, I shall observe these Doctrines.

I. GOD is wont to Threaten a People, and give them Warning before He brings Destroying Judgments upon them.

II. IF they Repent of the Evil of their Sins; and turn from them to the Lord; God will also Repent, and not bring the threaten'd Evil of Punishment upon them.

III. BUT if a People when thus Threatned go on obstinately in their Sins, they may expect that God will bring His Destroying Judgments upon them till they are made Desolate.

DOCT. I. GOD is wont to Threaten a People, and give them Warning before He brings Destroying Judgments upon them.

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At what instant I speak, to pluck up — God utters His Voice in dreadful Threatnings before He gives the fatal blow. He causeth the Woe-Trumpets to sound before He pours out the Vials of His Wrath. Thus God threatned the Sinners of the Old World, and yet spared them One Hundred and Twenty Years before He brought the Flood upon them to destroy them, Gen. 6. 3,—7. In which time Noah was a Preacher of Righteousness, and the building the Ark a sign. Yea the great Prophet and Teacher, our LORD JESUS CHRIST, is said to Preach to those Sinners, whose Spirits are now in Prison, 1 Pet. 3. 19, 20. *By which also he went & preached unto the spirits in prison: Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water. In or by which—i.e. His God Head, which is an eternal Spirit. Noah was but an Instrument in His Hand. God early denounc'd dreadful Threatnings against the Israelites upon Condition of their Revolt and Apostacy, Lev 26. 14. — 34. — If ye shall despise my statutes — I will set my face against you, and ye shall be slain before your enemies. ver. 21. And if ye walk contrary to me — I will bring seven times more plagues upon you — your Land shall be desolate &c. And thus God sent the Pro-*

phet *Jonah* to the *Ninevites*, tho' they were not his peculiar Covenant People, with that Message, Chap. 3. 4. — *Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.* Notwithstanding which, God had sparing Mercy in reserve for them. Now, God doth thus threaten, and speak against a People,

I. *IN and by His Word.* Herein God's Wrath is reveal'd from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men. God threatens His degenerate People by His Word in the mouths of His Ministers, *Hos. 6. 5. I have bewed them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth.* Tho' Men were the Instruments in Writing, or Pronouncing these Threatnings; yet they wrote and spake as mov'd and inspir'd by the Holy Ghost, *2 Pet. 1. 21.* And therefore this Word is to be received not as the Word of Men; but as indeed it is the Word of God. *Thus saith the Lord.* And this Word of God abideth in full force and virtue throughout all Generations, *1 Pet. 1. 24, 5. All flesh is as grass — But the word of the Lord endureth for ever.* It not only concerns those to whom it was nextly directed; but all to whom it comes, and they may assure themselves that if their Case be the same it will take place on them. *Rom. 15. 4. Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our Learning.* And thus
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the Punishments recorded in Scripture, are said to be *our Examples*, — 1 Cor. 10. 6. In them we do as in a *figure* behold the truth and faithfulness of God in fulfilling His Word. Sinners must therefore realize it that the Threatnings of God's Word are denounced against them as truly as if their Names were mentioned. *Thou art the Man.* And if they continue impenitent they shall find it so in the Day of the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God, when as many as have sinned *in the law*, shall be judged *by the law*, i. e. the written Word. Rom. 2. 12. All must *hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches*, Rev. 2. 7.

2. God speaks against a People by His *Providential Dispensations*. When together with the Threatnings of His Word, He stretcheth out His Hand to smite them. There's a *Voice* in the Rod, and by it God says, Turn at my Reproof, Mic. 6. 9. The Lord's Voice crieth unto the City — *hear ye the Rod*... When God in His Providence threatens to bring desolating Judgments on a backsliding People, and then stays His Hand; or when He brings lighter Chastisements, and in Judgment remembers Mercy, so that they are not consum'd; He then gives a People warning, and says, *Prepare to meet thy God*... Or as Lev. 26. 23, 4. And if ye will not be reformed by these things,
but

GOD will not Destroy

ut will walk contrary unto me : then will I
also walk contrary unto you, and will punish
you yet seven times for your sins. By such
judicial Dispensations, God calls to a Peo-
ple to stand in Awe of Him ; to Repent
and turn to Him, when His Wrath is kind-
led but a little, and begins to burn. The
Voice of Christ, to whom all Judgment is
committed, is that, Joh. 5. 14. *Sin no more,*
lest a worse thing come unto you. Don't go
on to provoke me, lest I bring utter ruin
upon you.

USE. I. LEARN from what hath been said,
the Mercy, Patience and Forbearance of God.
He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve
the Children of Men, Lam. 3. 33. Judgment
is his strange Work. Isa. 28. 21. And he doth
not usually proceed to it, till he hath tried
other means, and given his People fair
Warning. Neh. 9. 17. Thou art a God
ready to Pardon, Gracious and Merciful, slow
to Anger. — and forsookest them not.
God endureth with much long suffering,
even the Vessels of Wrath — Rom. 9. 22.
He is the God of Patience. Rom. 15. 5. And
when he proclaims His Name, one Letter
in it is that, *Long suffering*, Exod. 34. 6.
Sometimes when His Hand hath been lift-
ed up ready to give the deadly Blow, His
Bowels of Compassion have moved Him to
stay His Hand, Hos. 11. 8, 9. *How shall I*
come

give thee up Ephraim? how shall I deliver thee, Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim? mine heart is turned within me — I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim; for I am God, & not man, — O let us then give God the Glory of these Divine and amiable Perfections! Let not us despise the Riches of His Goodness and Forbearance and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth to Repentance. Let us not after our hardness and impenitent Hearts treasure up to our selves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, Rom. 2. 4, 5. But,

2. **LET** us take the Warning God gives us, and Turn unto Him. Let not any of us encourage and harden our selves in Sin because God may have threatned again and again, and yet hath not brought the deserved Destruction. Sinners are very prone to this pernicious and provoking Evil, Eccl. 8. 11. *Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily; therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* O take heed of this Presumption and Securi-ty! It is often a presage of Ruin. Prov. 29. 1. *He that being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* O take the warning then which God gives you in his Word and Pro-
vidence

vidence, and turn to Him without Delay. Now that God says to us, as Ezek. 33. 11. *Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: for why will you die, O house of Israel; Let us relent, and without delay make our Peace with God thro' Jesus Christ. Let us as a People take the Warning; Hear and obey God's Voice in His inflicted and threatened Judgments. Let us Repent, and put away the Evil of our Doings, that God may Repent of the Evil, and not bring it upon us. Which leads me to the*

II. DOCT. IF a People, when thus Threatened, Repent of the Evil of their Sins, and turn from them to the Lord; God will also Repent, and not bring the threatened Evil of Punishment upon them.

1. What is implied in a People's Repenting of the Evil of their Sins, and turning from them to the Lord.

2. IF they Repent, God will also Repent of the Evil which he thought to have done unto them.

I. WHAT is implied in a People's Repenting of the Evil of their Sins, and turning from them to the Lord?

Answer.

Ans. I. It supposeth, That they are truly and generally Convinc'd of the Evil and Danger of their Sins. Sin is the worst of Evils : the wages of it is Death, Rom. 6. 23. But alas ! Such is the Power of deceitful Lusts, to blind Men's minds, that they flatter themselves in their own Eyes. Psal. 36. 2. Agreeably there is a woe denounced against those that call Evil Good, and Good Evil ; that put Darkness for Light — Isa. 5. 20, Wicked Men, whose understanding is darkened, have wrong notions of God, of Sin, &c. For in their Practical Judgments, they prefer the gratification of their Lusts before the enjoyment of God. The old Man is Corrupt according to Deceitful Lusts ; so that while a Person or People are under the governing influence of Sin, they do not make a right Judgment concerning the Nature and pernicious Consequences of this Deadly Evil. But when God gives them Repentance, he sends his Spirit to Convince them of Sin, making them to see and know that it is, *an evil and bitter thing that they have forsaken the Lord their God.* Such a people, are brought to consider and realize it, that they have Dishonoured God, and Wounded themselves, by their Iniquities. God says to them, *Thou hast fallen by thine Iniquities,* Hos. 14. 1. *Thou hast destroy'd thyself ;* and his Word is quick and powerful,

ful, carrying Light and Conviction with It, when set home by his Spirit. So that they are brought to say, as Job 33. 27. *I have sin'd, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not.* Yea, they are convinced that this is the procuring Cause of the Calamities they suffer, and are brought to determine it must be forsaken, or it will be their ruin. Before they might be ready to attribute their Miseries to other Causes; but now God makes them know that their Iniquities have seperated between them and their God, *Isai. 59. 2.* His Voice to them is that, *Jer. 4. 18.* *Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee, this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart.* And they are made sensible that Sin is the accursed thing which troubleth them. Such a Conviction as this is given by the Spirit of God, commanding the Blessing on the Calls of His Word and Providence, when a People attend to this great Duty of Repen^trance. The saving Convictions made on God's Children are reviv'd; so that they awake out of their sleepy frames, and become active and vigorous in promoting the necessary Work of Reformation. Others have good Impressions made upon them, which the Spirit of God fastens and makes preparatory to saving Conversion. And tho

a Penitent People.

tho' there may be many at such a time that fall short of this; yet even of these there are not a few who are so convinced in their Consciences of the evil and danger of Sin, that they outwardly Reform, and do many things †. Destruction from God is such a terror to them that they dare not commit those gross Sins which they before allowed themselves in *, nor omit those Religious Duties they before liv'd in the neglect of.

2. It supposeth that *they inwardly grieve and mourn for their Sins whereby they have dishonoured and provoked God.* In true Repentance, Sin which was before lov'd and delighted in, is loathed and hated; and inasmuch as it is an evil present, this hatred is expressed in hearty Sorrow upon the account of it, 2 Cor. 7. 10. *Godly Sorrow worketh Repentance.* The true Penitent mourns heartily because he hath offended so great and glorious, so good and gracious a God, by his Iniquities. He looks unto Jesus his Compassionate Saviour, considers how his Iniquities have pierced Him, and kindly relents, yea mourns bitterly. Agreeably it is Prophecied, that when God would pour out the Spirit of Grace upon the House of David, and upon the Inhabitants of Jerusalem; *They should look upon him whom they had pierced and mourn, as one*

† Mark 6. 20. * 2 Pet. 2. 20.

mourneth for an only son——, Zech. 12. 10,---12. The Land shall mourn——. And this is what God calls his backsliding People to, Joel 2. 12, 13. Therefore now saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with weeping, and with mourning. And rent your heart and not your garment, and turn unto the Lord your God. Agreeably, when a People are bro't to Repentance, there's a general Mourning and Sorrow upon the account of their Sins; they are affected with grief, and their Souls are wounded within them under the terrible Apprehension of the evil and danger of Sin. And tho' all do not mourn after a godly sort, because they have offended God, and vexed His Holy Spirit; yet there are many who do thus sigh and cry for all the abominations done in the midst of them, Ezek. 9. 4. And others have Sin so imbibtered to them, that they can't take pleasure in it, as they us'd to do; but abstain at least from the outward Commission; so grievous are the pains, and so sore the wounds of their Consciences.

3. WHEN a People are Penitent, *they Confess their Sins before the Lord, & solemnly engage to forsake them.* Such a People do not seek to cover and extenuate their Sins; do not go on to justify themselves, and complain of God, as if he dealt hardly with them. As they, Ezek. 18. 25. Ye say,
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the way of the Lord is not equal. But they justify God in all the Evils He brings upon them, and acknowledge that they are punished less than their Iniquities deserve. Thus they give Glory to God, when they Repent, taking shame and blame to themselves. Accordingly, this is named as one ingredient of Repentance, *Lev. 26. 40.* If they shall *Confess their Iniquity*, and the Iniquity of their Fathers—. And we find that God's ancient People attended this duty when brought to Repentance, *Judg. 10. 10.* *And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, we have sinned against thee; both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim.* And thus the Seed of Israel stood and confessed their Sins, --- *Neh. 9. 2.* When this good Spirit prevails among a People, they will be ready to confess with *Ezra, Chap. 9. 6.* *O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head.* And with *Daniel, Chap. 9. 5.* *We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled by departing from thy judgments. ver. 7.* *O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day. ver. 8.* *O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face: to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee.* Their Petitions for Par-

don and Favour will be accompanied with such penitent Confessions: yea, they will solemnly engage to forsake their Sins whereby they have dishonoured and provoked God. When God is pleading the Quarrel of His Covenant with them, they will not only confess their Violations of it; but also, as they may be call'd, be ready afresh to enter into God's Covenant and Oath, that they will forsake those Sins which appear to be the Sins of the times wherein they live. Thus God's People did on a solemn Fast, Neh. 9. 38. *We make a sure Covenant, and write it, and our princes, levites, and priests, seal unto it.* Chap. 10. 29. *They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the Lord our God, and his judgments, and his Statutes.* And in particular, they engag'd to watch against some Iniquities that had prevail'd among them. Agreeable to this, A Venerable Synod of our own have observ'd, 'We seldom read of any Solemn Reformation, but it was accomplished 'this way, as the Scripture doth abundantly declare and testify" †. I would here ask leave with all humility to express my desires that this Duty might be again so:

† Result of Synods, p. 112.

lemly attended by these Churches. But to return, All I shall further say under this Head is, that where Repentance is sincere, our Confession of Sin will be *free and ingenuous*, flowing from an afflicting sense of the dishonour done to God, and an hearty desire to give Glory to Him. The Confession of such is not extorted, as *Judas*, when under the rack of a tormenting Conscience, said, *I have sinned*, Mat. 27. 4.

4. *A Penitent People humble themselves under God's Threatnings, and Submit to Him.* The pride and stubbornness of their Spirits are subdued, that they dare no longer contend with God, being convinced of the truth of that Word, *Wo to him that strives with his Maker*, Isai. 45. 9. They now fall down at God's foot, and resign themselves to His Sovereign Will, being ready to accept the punishment of their Sins, and willing to be reconciled to God upon His own terms, Lev. 26. 41. — *If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity.* Such a People are of a broken and contrite Spirit under the Tokens of God's displeasure against them, submit to Him, and are more concerned to have their Sins and God's Anger removed, than to be delivered from outward Calamities. Before they might refuse to receive Correction; but now they

can say with *Ephraim*, *Thou hast chastised me; and I was chastised...*, Jer. 31. 18. They submit to the Yoke God lays upon them, and humble themselves under His mighty Hand.

5. A Penitent People Turn from their Evil Ways, and Return to the Lord their God. Thus a People's Repenting is express'd in the Text by *turning from their Evil*, i.e. the Evil of Sin, which is the worst and the only Evil that stirs up God's holy displeasure against a Person, or Nation. The true Penitent not only confesseth, but also forsaketh his Sin. *Prov.* 28. 13. There's a turning from Sin in inward *Aversion* to it, and an hearty endeavour to put it far away as the abominable thing he hateth. Agreeably, Repentance is called Repentance from *dead works*, *Heb.* 6. 1. i.e. Sins, which are dead Works; for they proceed from the body of Death in us, and if persisted in, end in Death. Sin when it is finished bringeth forth Death. Accordingly, it is not enough that a degenerate People sanctify Fasts, confess their Sins, and promise Amendment. No! they must forsake them and reform, or they do not Repent. *Ezek.* 14. 6. Say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord God, Repent and turn your selves from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations. There must be a fixed Resolution, by the help of God, to abandon our Sins,

Sins, and this must be put in execution : The Wicked must forsake their Thoughts, and evil Ways. As the Children of Israel, *put away the strange gods* from among them, and served the Lord ; and His Soul was grieved for the misery of *Israel*, Judg. 10. 16. We must not hold fast our Iniquities, refusing to let them go ; but must break off our Sins by Repentance. We must in our several Places seriously engage in the Work of Reformation. *Civil Rulers* in their Places must lead in this necessary Work, improving their Authority to suppress those Evils which threaten the Destruction of their People, as they provoke God to depart from them ; they must endeavour to turn away Wrath, by being a Terror, not to Good Works, but to the Evil. Thus King *Josiah*, *put down the Idolatrous Priests, &c.* 2 King. 23. 4, 5. The *Ministers of the Gospel* must in their Places bear due Testimony against the Sins of a backsliding People, Mai. 58. 1. *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sin.* Heads of Families must endeavour to put all Iniquity far from their Tabernacles ; and put *Joshua's* Resolution in practice ; As for me, and my House, *we will serve the Lord.* Particular Persons must be sensible of the Plague of their own Hearts, and seek to God

God their Saviour to convert and heal their Souls. In a word, the *Body of a People* must hear and obey God's Voice, in *Isai. 1. 16, 17. Wash ye, make you clean; put away the evil of your ways and doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil, Learn to do well —*. It was said even of *Nineveh*, *Jon. 3. 10. God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way —*. I would hope some of them were so taught the knowledge of the true God, and of the only way of Salvation by the promised Messiah, that they sincerely repented, and were eternally saved. However there must be, as there was among them, an outward prevailing Reformation of those hainous Evils for which God threatens Destruction. And upon this, we find God hath spar'd a sinful People; as the *Nenevites*; and His Covenant People *Israel*, delivering them from those publick Calamities which threatned their ruin; tho' it appear'd afterwards by their speedy Apostacy, when the Judgments were removed, that the generality of the People were not thoroughly reformed, nor stedfast in God's Covenant. Upon the account of which, God again and again turn'd against them, and punished them seven times for their Iniquities. So that in order to a People's obtaining lasting Peace in the enjoyment of God's especial Favour and Blessing, it is
needful

needful that they be generally sincere in their Repentance, & thorow in their Reformation. In which there is an hearty Turning from all known Sin, as it is contrary to the revealed will & declarative Glory of God, and a returning to that One God, who is the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost, as to our highest End and chief Good; as to our Lord and Portion; to walk in His Ways, and keep all His Commandments, 1 Kin. 8. 48. *And so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul.* There must be such a Repentance towards God, Act. 20. 21. Such a turning to the Lord, Chap. 11. 21. if we wou'd hope, as a People, to enjoy the continued shines of God's face, and the peculiar Tokens of His favour. The Power of Godliness must take place among us in the general Establishment of pure and undefiled Religion, in Doctrine, Worship and Manners. Now, such a Repentance and Reformation as this, must be the especial Work of the Spirit of God poured out upon a People, in His Divine Gifts and Graces, Ezek. 36. 26, 7. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell*
in

in the land that I gave to your fathers, and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleanneses, and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loath your selves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord God, be it known unto you : be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord God, in the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. Chap. 39. 29. Neither will I hide my face any more from them : for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God. The Spirit of God is the Dispenser of the saving Blessings purchased by our Lord Jesus Christ. O that this comprehensive Blessing might be bestow'd on us, and the whole Israel of God ! Lord save thy People, and bless thine Inheritance, feed them and lift them up forever.

II. IF a People thus Repent, God will also Repent, and not bring the threatned Evil upon them.

GOD often Threatens a People and Warns them with a gracious Design of Delivering them, by Awakening and so Reforming of them, &c. But I now proceed to make some brief Improvement of what hath been already delivered.

USE, I. LEARN that GOD's ways are equal, and his dealings with Nations, as well as particular Persons, are Righteous. Though God is Sovereign, God over All; yet He doth not use an Arbitrary Power, and Absolute Sovereignty in Punishing the Children of Men. No! *The Judge of all the Earth doth right*: He proceeds in Judgment according to known and establish'd Rules of Righteousness, and makes it appear that Justice and Judgment are the Habitation of his Throne. *Psal. 89. 14.* God could Appeal to his People. *Ezek. 18. 25, — 29.* Hear now, O house of Israel, Is not my way equal? Are not your ways unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done, shall he die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doth

that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth, and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die. Yet saith the house of Israel, The way of the Lord is not equal. O house of Israel, are not my ways equal? Are not your ways unequal? Yea, when God was about to Destroy Sodom & Gomorrah, He says, speaking after the manner of Men, Gen. 18. 21. I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know. And righteous Lot was remarkably delivered from the Overthrow. There's none of God's Dispensations towards the Children of Men, but what may be fairly accounted for from a due Consideration of the Covenant of Works which God at first entred into with Adam, "not only for himself, but for his Posterity"; of the Covenant of Grace, and of the State of Mankind, as the World is under the Government of our Lord Jesus Christ, God-Man-Mediator. If there be any perplexing Difficulties to us, these must proceed from the darkness and weakness of our own minds. God's righteousness is like the great Mountains, even when his Judgments are a great Deep. Psal. 36. 6. Let us then give God the Glory of his Justice and Rectoral Holiness, acknowledging

knowledging that he is clear when he judgeth. And let not Sinners take up Prejudices against God, as if he dealt hardly with them; But rather Condemn themselves, and in a believing Penitent manner, seek to be Reconci'd to him, for *he is gracious and merciful, and repenteth of the Evil.*

Which leads me to

USE II. *LET us all be Exhorted to Repent, and turn to the Lord, that He may Repent of the Evil, and Spare us.* God is this Day Calling us to Humble ourselves under his Amazing Judgment, whereby He threatn'd to send us down quick into the Pit, when he terribly shook the Earth. And what reason have we to fear before Him, when we consider our many provoking Sins, and the Tokens of God's Anger in the Course of His Providence? God hath known us above most of the Families of the Earth, and therefore may Visit us for our Iniquities; which have been committed against shining Light, and Covenant Bonds. There hath been great Contempt cast on Jesus Christ, and His great Salvation, while many have appeared to prefer the World, and their Lusts before Him: Great Opposition to the Spirit of Grace, while formality in Religion hath sadly prevailed; yea

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many have been profane and vicious, God's Ordinances, His House, His Day, have not been valued as they should have been. There have also been Scandalous Immoralities found among us, as Injustice, Oppression, Intemperance, Uncleanneſs, &c.— And alas? we have ſeem'd, till this late ſurpriſing Providence, to be in a dreadful measure unconcern'd under our Sins, and the awful withdrawments of God from us. Few comparatively have appear'd to lament after the Lord, and to ſtir up themſelves to take hold of a departing God. Nor have we been duly Affected with the foregoing Diſpenſations of Divine Providence, in which there hath been a wonderful mixture of Judgment and Mercy. I might here remind you of ſome of them. God hath drawn the *Sword* of the *Wilderneſs* to plead the quarrel of his Covenant; but now grants us a good measure of *Peace* and *Quietneſs*. He hath threatn'd & afflicted us with *Scorching Heat* and *Drought*; and yet in a good measure ſpar'd and recover'd the *Fruits of the Earth*. He hath ſent mortal *Sickneſs* in ſome places, and loudly call'd to us to be *Ready*, by Repeating *Sudden Deaths* in an extraordinary manner; and yet we now enjoy *general Health*. The God of *Glory* hath utter'd his Voice in *Terrible Thunders*, and threatn'd to Conſume us

us by the *Flame* of his devouring Fire; And yet the *Lives* of his People have been *Pre- cious* in his sight. He visited us with a *violent Storm* by which we sustain'd con- siderable *Damage*; And yet much *sparing Mercy* was extended towards us, as to our *Lives* and *Estates*, by *Sea* and *Land*. And the day following, which was the *Lord's- Day*, God set his *Bow* in the *Cloud*, a *Token* of his *Covenant*, that he will not again destroy the *Earth* with a *flood*. Gen. 9. 13, —16. And if we consider the *Day*, and the fair oppor- tunity we had of attending the *Means* of *Grace* after the *Storm*, we may in some sort behold our *Glorious Saviour* with a *Rainbow* about his head, as he appear'd to *John* in a *Vision*. Rev. 10. 1. And thus, there appear'd a *Rainbow* round about the *Throne*. 4. 3. "Whereby is fitly repre- sented God's *Covenant* of *Grace* with his *Church*, that namely, notwithstanding all the *storms* and *tempests* of *persecution* and other *troubles* they must encounter with in this *unsteady World*, yet he will never suf- fer them to *Perish*, as God spake once of the *Waters* of the *Deluge*, Gen. 9. " * God might in this bright *Appearance* give us a *Token* for *Good*, that in *Judgment* he will remember *Mercy*; and may we not

* Dutch Annotations.

humbly hope his Voice to us is that, Isa. 54. 9. *For this is as the waters of Noah unto me : for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee.* Wroth, "To wit, so as I have been, or so as to forsake thee utterly" *. However, as we were not reform'd by these Things, God hath more lately Visited us with an *Amazing Shock of an Earthquake*, which Providence appears still more wonderful, now that we hear there was a terrible shake of the Earth at *Barbados*, near Two Thousand Miles distant from us, about Thirty Six Hours before. God then threatned to destroy us suddenly, and yet spared us in His great Mercy, tho' the Earth trembled, yet was it kept by the same Almighty Hand which shook it, from Opening and Swallowing us up. We were *perplexed, but not in despair; cast down, but not destroyed.* Or, whatever dismal Apprehensions many might have of sudden Destruction, *God's thoughts were not our thoughts* †; but as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so did he magnify his Mercy in the Article of our extremity; Indeed in this Judgment God hath spoken against us, and yet he earnestly re-

* Pook

† Isa. 55. 8, 9.

members us still, and gives a space for Repentance, while some places are alarm'd by repeated Shakes and Noise. And is not this the Voice of God's Providence to us; *If ye turn from the Evil, I will repent of the Evil* — and that of our Lord and Judge, Luk. 13. 3. *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.* Let us then be Exhorted earnestly and speedily to engage in this necessary Work, Seeking to God in the Name of Christ, to pour upon us his Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Repentance and Reformation. And certainly, we should take Encouragement, when we hear, that God hath Sanctified these extraordinary means together with the dispensation of his Word, to make good impressions on many. I suppose, few, if any can remember the time when People were so generally Awakened, and brought to say with trembling, *What must we do to be saved* *. O let us then lift up the hands that hang down, let us continue instant in Prayer to the God of all Grace that He would by His Spirit carry on this Work till a sincere Repentance and thorough Reformation be wrought among this People. Nor should the sense of our great Sinfulness and Unworthiness dishearten us; but excite us to have the more

* Act. 16. 29, 30.

entire dependance on the Merits of our Lord Jesus Christ; for *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain* †. His Blood cleanseth from all Sin; it is of Vertue sufficient to cleanse a Nation, Thousands and Millions, as well as one single Person. For, *It is the Blood of God*, Act. 20. 28. In Christ Jesus there's a *Fountain open'd to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin, and for uncleanness*, Zech. 13. 1. Here's Merit and Grace eno^r. Let such then as are sensible of the Guilt of their numerous & hainous Transgressions, come and receive the perfect Righteousness of Christ for their Justification before God. Let such as are sensible of the power and pollution of their Sins, come, and receive the Spirit and Grace of Christ, to renew and sanctify them. *Who-soever will let him take the water of life freely*, †. And is not the Day near when the Fountain now mention'd shall be in a signal manner opened in the extensive Preaching of the Gospel, and the abundant Effusions of the Spirit of Grace, so that many Nations shall be sprinkled, yea washed from their Sins; when *all Israel shall be saved*; and the receiving of them shall be Life from the Dead to the Gentiles! See Rom. 11. 15, —26. Let us then pray and wait; be-

† Rev. 5. 12.

* Rev. 22. 17.

lieve and not make haste. *The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie, though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come, it will not tarry,* Hab. 2. 3. And in our Prayers, let us be earnest with God that He would pour out His Spirit upon us, and His Blessing upon our Offspring. Did not our Fore-fathers importunately ask this Blessing of God? Are there not innumerable *Petitions* upon the File in Heaven, if I may so speak, the *Prayer* of which is chiefly this, that God would pour out His Spirit upon the Children of *New-England*, and so Bless them with all *Spiritual Blessings* in *Heavenly Things* in *Christ Jesus*? Hath not our *Advocate* in Heaven assur'd us that whatever we ask of the Father in His Name, He will give it †? Hath not that God who can't lie promis'd that *He will shew Mercy to Thousands of them that love him, and keep his Commandments*, *Exod. 20. 6.* Yea, hath He not begun to answer our Prayers for this great Blessing? Let these Considerations then Excite us to Repent, lest having been lifted up to Heaven in Privileges, we be cast down the deeper into Hell for our abuse of them: Let them encourage us to turn to the Lord our God, with those words which

† Joh. 15. 16.

He hath put into our Mouths; Take away
all iniquity, and receive us graciously, Hos.
14. 2. And to Watch unto Prayer with all
perseverance, 'till the Lord come, and
Rain down Righteousness upon us.

The End of the First S E R M O N,

Preach'd December 21st. 1727. On a Day of Publick
Fasting and Prayer, Occasioned by the EARTH-
QUAKE.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N II.

LORD'S-DAY, December 24th. 1727. P.M.

Jer. 18. 7, 8. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*

DOCT. I. GOD is wont to Threaten a People, and give them warning, before he brings Destroying Judgments upon them.

DOCT. II. IF such a People Repent of the Evil of their Sins, and turn from them to the Lord; God will also Repent, and not bring the Threatned Evil of Punishment upon them.

UNDER this Second Doctrine we inquir'd, *What is implied in a People's Repenting of the Evil of their Sins?* An Answer hath already been given to this Inquiry. We therefore proceed to shew,

III. IF

H. IF a People, when Threatned, thus Repent, God will also Repent, and not bring the threatned Evil of Punishment upon them.

WHEN God threatens a sinful People with Destruction, there's yet a Reserve of Mercy. The Threatning is not so absolute as to leave no place for Repentance, Jer. 36. 2, 3. *Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day. It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way, that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.* "The Omniscient God could not be at a loss about the Event; but this is spoken of the All-knowing God after the manner of Men, to shew how acceptable to Him true Repentance is".

Now this Truth will appear, if we consider, and duly weigh the following Particulars,

I. It will appear, if we consider the gracious Promises and Declarations of God's Word. There are great and precious Promises made to the Penitent by the true God. Indeed God hath not absolutely promised particular Persons temporal Deliverance

rance from this or the other publick Calamity, tho' they truly Repent. Job 9. 22. *He destroyeth the perfect, and the wicked.* Eccl. 9. 2. *There is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked.* However, God often sets a visible mark of His Favour upon such, when He is coming out against a Degenerate People in destroying Judgments, Ezek. 9. 4. And if at any time He bring the temporal Evil upon them, He sanctifieth it, & makes it work together for their good †. God doth not punish such as an Enemy, in a way of vindictive Justice; but Chastiseth them as a merciful Father, for their profit. And no tribulation or distress shall be able to seperate them from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*. Nor may a Penitent People expect to be delivered from all kinds of Calamity: While Sin remains, there will be Sorrow. But then, they shall not be plucked up and destroyed, the Evil here threatned. No! They shall continue a People before the Lord. He will dwell among them, be their God, and own them for his People. And the Affliction they suffer shall be sanctified to seperate them from their Sins; and not be sent in Wrath for their Destruction. Isai. 27. 8, 9. *He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the*

† Rom. 8. 28. * ver. 35—39.

east wind. By this therefore the iniquity of Jacob shall be purged, and this is the fruit to take away his sin. And thus God speaks very graciously concerning them that were carried Captive with Jeconiah, Jer. 24. 5, — 7. Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel, like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land, and I will build them, and not pull them down, and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. And as for the Church and People of God in the first and purest times of the Gospel, they were persecuted indeed, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroy'd. 2 Cor. 4. 9. The Spirit of God, and of Glory rested on them, and the trial of their Faith was more precious than Gold. The Church flourished like the Palm-tree, under her pressures, of which it is observ'd, "the more it is press'd down, the more it grows." What was said of God's Israel in Egypt, may be applied to them. Exod. 1. 12. But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew. Thus it was in

a Spiritual sense. Vast numbers were born to God; the Blood of *Martyrs* being made by God the Seed of the Church *. Having hinted these things to state the point, and remove some seeming difficulties, I shall briefly mention some of the Promises which confirm and illustrate this Truth. Lev. 26. 41, 2 — If then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity: Then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. Isai. 58. 6, — 8. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke. Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house; when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thy self from thine own flesh? Then shall thy light break forth as the morning and thine healing shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee, the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward. Hos, 6. 1. Come and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us: he hath smitten, and he will bind us up. Ezek. 33. 14, 15. Acts 2. 38, 39. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remis-

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sion of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord your God shall call. Chap. 3. 19. By such good words as these doth God encourage His People to Repent and turn to Him. Now we are assured that 'till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.

2. THIS appears from the Provision made for true Penitents in Jesus Christ, and from the Constitution of the Covenant of Grace. God hath made abundant Provision for the Salvation of His People in Christ Jesus, who hath offer'd a Sacrifice of Atonement for the Congregation of His People, who look to Him by Faith, mourn for their Sins, and turn from them unto the Lord. Agreeably, Aaron was commanded to offer a Sin-offering for the People, with the blood of which he was to make Atonement for all the Congregation of Israel, Lev. 16. 15—17. Thus on the Day of Atonement they were to afflict their Souls, and offer an Offering made by Fire unto the Lord, Lev. 23. 27. Thus, the Congregation of Israel were to kill the Passover, and sprinkle the Blood upon the door-posts—that the destroyer might not come into their houses, Exod. 12. Which things did prefigure Jesus Christ the Lamb of God which taketh

take away the sin of the World †. And we are hereby taught that such as do in a believing penitent manner look unto *Jesus*, shall find mercy with God. God will say of them, spare them from going down to the Pit, I have found a ransom. And tho' it be true, that none shall receive the everlasting benefit of Christ's Sacrifice, but such as heartily receive the Lord *Jesus*, mourning for their sins with a godly Sorrow; yet the Body of a People fare the better on temporal accounts, and God will not destroy them, where such a frame of spirit is found prevailing among them. *Zech. 12. 6,—10.* And this is plain from the nature and tenor of the *New Covenant*, the Covenant of Grace, in which God gives encouragement, not only to single Persons, but also to His People to Repent, that their Sins may be blotted out, and their Iniquities not be their ruin. *Jer. 31. 31,—36.* *Behold, the days come saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord,) But this shall*

† Joh. 1. 29.

be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Compar'd with Hebr. 8. 8, — 12. In which there seems to be a gracious promise of a national Conversion of the Jews, and then that they should not as a People, be rejected any more. And may not the People of God in New-England hope for a Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace relating to them, that shall resemble this? May we not hope that God will revive His Work among us, and not utterly cast us off?

3. WHEN a People Repent, then God's Threatnings and Judgments have the desired Effect.

Effect. These are means God useth to purge away the Sins of His People. When God threatens and brings lighter Judgments, it is for their Warning, that they may be reclaimed and reformed. And therefore when these means are blessed for this end, and the Work is in some good measure effected, God will return in a way of mercy and favour. He will repent, and change the course of His Providence towards such a People. Now His Word accomplishest that which he pleaseth, and prospereth in the thing whereto he sent it *. Now the Rod & Reproof gives Wisdom; His People open their Ear to Discipline, and turn to Him that smiteth them. And therefore God will cast away the Rod, and shew Himself as a reconciled Father. Thus God said of His ancient People, *Isai. 10. 12.* — *When the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria.* God calls the Assyrian the Rod of His Anger, *ver. 5.* And threatened to send him against an hypocritical Nation, *ver. 6.* But then, when the Work was done for which God sent him, then he would punish him, and deliver His People.

* *Isai. 55. 11.*

4. THIS appears from God's Providential Dispensations towards His ancient Covenant People, and Others. Whatever their Sins had been, yet when they Repented, God also Repented of the Evil, and returned to them in a way of Favour. Thus, the House of Israel lamented after the Lord, put away Baalim, &c. And God delivered them out of the Hand of the Philistines; 1 Sam. 7. When Ephraim, i.e. "the Ten Tribes, or those of all the Tribes that fear'd the Lord", bemoand himself, and Repented, God said, *Is Ephraim my dear Son? is he a pleasant Child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: — I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord, Jer. 31. 18, — 20.* Yea, when the Ninevites turned from their Evil way, God repented of the Evil that he said he would do unto them, and did it not, Jon. 3. 10.

. DOCT. III. BUT if a People when thus Threatned go on obstinately in their Sins, they may expect that God will bring His Destroying Judgments upon them till they are made desolate.

CONTRARIES have contrary Consequences. ver. 9, 10. Context. Israel's forsaking the Lord, was to make their Land desolate, and a perpetual hissing; ver. 16. Deut. 28. 15. *If thou wilt not hearken unto the voice*

of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; then all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee. ver. 16, 36, 48, &c. And the Sacred History informs us that these dreadful Threatnings were fulfilled upon them till they were cast out of the good Land God had given them; deprived of their especial Priviledges, and deliver'd up to an amazing Destruction. The Sinners of the *Old World* despis'd the Warnings God gave them by *Noah*, and resisted His Spirit. Then *the Flood came and destroyed them all*, Gen. 7. Luk. 17. 27. There's a destroying power in Sin persisted in, it hath ruin'd Nations and Kingdoms, Jer. 47. *Amos* 1st & 2^d. Chapters. And this might be argued from God's Justice, Holiness, and His Truth in fulfilling the Threatning of His Word &c. In this sense it may be said as, 1 Sam. 15. 29. *The strength of Israel will not lie, nor repent.* God is bound for His own Glory as His highest End; and therefore if a People obstinately refuse to Repent and give Glory to God, they must expect that God will glorify Himself upon them in their Destruction, and so become fearful in Praises t.

t. Lev. 10. 3. Exod. 15. 11.

FURTHER to Confirm this awful Truth, I shall briefly observe God's manner of Proceeding in Judgment against an Impenitent People that enjoy the means of Grace, and are in Covenant with God.

I. WHEN such a People go on Impenitently and refuse to be Reformed by God's Word and Providence; *He takes His grieved Spirit from them.* While God threatens His People, and sends lighter Judgments as Calls to Repentance, He also usually sends *His Spirit* to strive with them; but assureth us that *His Spirit shall not always strive with man*, Gen. 6. 3. Accordingly when they resist and vex Him, quenching His good Motions, and sinning presumptuously against the Convictions He gives them; as His ancient People did †. God is provok'd to withdraw His Spirit from the Means they enjoy; and to send His Plagues upon their Hearts; and then such as were blind are judicially blinded, such whose Hearts were hard, are hardned, being given up to their own Lusts, and the Temptations of Satan. Psal. 81. 11, 12. *My people would not hearken to my voice: and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up unto their own hearts lust: and they walked in their own counsels.* And now God may threaten in

† Act. 7. 51.

His Word and by His Providence; but they will not turn at His Reproof. *Isai. 1. 5. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more.* Now that message may be bro't to them, *Isai. 6. 9, 10. And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not: and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes: lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert and be healed.* It follows, *ver. 11. -Till the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate.* And when God withdraws even the common Influences and Restraints of His Spirit, a People grow worse and worse under the outward means, and ripen apace for Ruin. They are as *Reprobate silver, because God hath rejected them,* *Jer. 6. 30,* All the means us'd to purge away their dross become ineffectual. And now there is oftentimes an evil Spirit of of slumber and carnal security prevailing over such a People; so that they will *not consider their latter end, till they come down wonderfully,* *Lam. 1. 9.* And wo will be unto them, when God takes His Holy Spirit from them. As far as this Judgment is inflicted, so far is their Day of Grace at an end. The things of their Peace are now
hidden

hidden from their eyes, and they will walk on in the paths which lead to destruction, *Jer. 5. 3, — 14.*

2. GOD then proceeds to take away the outward Ordinances and Means of Grace from them. These are the Visible Tokens of God's Presence with His People. Thus God set up His Tabernacle, and dwelt among His ancient People. But when they despised the Means of Grace, and abused them to harden themselves in Sin, as if they were deliver'd to do these and the other Abominations, and might Sin with impunity : I say, when it was thus, God remov'd these visible Tokens of His Presence and Favour, *Jer. 7. 9, 10, Will ye steal, murder and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye know not. And come and stand before me in this house which is called by my Name, and say, we are delivered to do all these abominations ? ver. 14. Therefore will I do unto this house which is called by my Name, wherein ye trust, and unto the place which I gave to you, and to your fathers, as I have done to Shiloh. The Ark was an especial Token of God's Presence; but when the Israelites refused to repent and turn to the Lord, God gave it up into the hands of their Enemies, 1 Sam. 4. The Temple afterwards with the holy things in it, was the*

the great *Medium* of their instituted Worship; But when they boasted of God's holy Mountain, crying, The Temple of the Lord, as if this would secure God's Presence, notwithstanding their Impenitency, God in His over-ruling Providence burnt and destroy'd it, first by the *Chaldeans*, then by the *Romans*; and cast them out of His sight. And thus God threatned the Church of *Ephesus*, Rev. 2. 5. *Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen; and repent and do the first works, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.* And what a fearful Example for the Confirmation of the truth before us, have we in this, and the other *Asian Churches*, once highly favour'd with the light and privileges of the Gospel?

3. *WHEN God is thus departed, and His Covenant broken, Destroying Judgments enter in, and make a People desolate.* Now the Glory and Defence of a People are gone; And there's a wide breach made at which desolating Judgments come pouring in as an overflowing Scourge. They who have been thus highly favour'd, but refuse to be the Lord's People, provoke Him to pluck them up, and destroy them from being a People in the Earth. Thus God threatned that *Ephraim should be broken, that*

is be not a people, *Isai. 7. 8.* And apostate *Israel* is forbidden to rejoyce as other People; because they had gone a whoring from their God, *Hos. 9. 1.* Others may for a time prosper in outward respects, tho' God be not their Covenant God; but when His People break His Covenant, and refuse to return unto Him, their Civil and Religious Priviledges, their Outward and Spiritual Enjoyments have been taken away together. When *Israel* forsook the Lord, and he had rejected them, their Civil and Ecclesiastical Constitution was broken, and they were scattered abroad to the four Winds of Heaven. How pathetically did our Saviour lament over them when He saw their Ruin approaching! *Mat. 23. 37, 8.* *O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not. Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.*

A P P L I C A T I O N.

U S E. I. FROM what hath been said we may infer, *that there is Reason to fear some dreadful Judgments yet to come on the Christian World.* If we look into *Great Britain*, what People have been more highly

ly favour'd with the Light and Priviledges of the Glorious Gospel? Or experienced more remarkable Deliverances in times of imminent Danger? Who have had louder Calls to Repentance in God's threatned Judgments; or more faithful Warnings by His Ministers? And yet Iniquity abounds after all, yea Crying Sins. And do not many refuse to return and reform? How little is there to be seen of that Good Spirit which animated the *first Reformers* in *England* and *Scotland*! Alas! By what we can learn, the power of Religion is very much weaken'd and decay'd among them, as well as among ourselves. And may we not fear God will Visit them with terrible Judgments? Surely we may well say with the Psalmist, Psal. 119. 120. *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments.* I speak not these things to discourage any that tremble at God's Word; but that we may all be quickned to Watch and Pray, and keep our Garments. Things may seem to look fair; and we ought to bless God for the Tranquility enjoyed: but what settled Peace can be expected while so many Dishonour God, Despise Christ, and reject the Offers of the Gospel? While *Rome* hath such Power, and they that call themselves Reform'd shew so little regard to Religion in the

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Power

Power and Purity of it? The Lord grant that we may not say, Peace and Safety, when sudden Destruction cometh *. The Lord help us, being mov'd with fear, to get into the Ark, into Christ, that whatever Evils come, we may be safe.

2. LEARN what is our great Duty and Interest this Day. To hear God's Voice, Repent and turn unto Him. God hath spoken in the Threatnings of His Word, and by the Rebukes of His Providence. Let us then to Day hear His Voice, and not harden our Hearts. The Lord hath rored out of Zion with a Voice which may well make us to tremble; and yet spared us from the threatned Destruction: And now says to us, *if ye return, I will Repent of the Evil*—. But threatens to bring Ruin upon us, if we go on impenitently, and refuse to be Reformed. Now then that God sets before us Life and Death, Blessing and Cursing, let us choose Life that we may live. *O that there were such an Heart in us, that we would fear the Lord, and keep all his Commandments always, that it might be well with us, and our Children forever †!* O that we could as a People so consider of our Evil ways as to determine to forsake them! that we could Mourn because we have offended and disho-

* 1 Thes. 5. 3. † Deut. 5. 29.

noured God by our Sins, and so turn to the Lord in hearty Repentance; that we could then heartily and successfully engage in the Work of Reformation. Our Days of Fasting and Prayer will rise up in Judgment against us, unless we bring forth fruits meet for Repentance: Let us therefore take heed and beware of giving God reason to Complain of us as of Ephraim and Judah, Hof. 6. 4. — *Your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it goeth away: Lest that threatening be fulfill'd upon us, Chap. 13. 3. Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with a whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney.*

3. LET each of us be Exhorted to Repent and turn from all our Transgressions; so Iniquity shall not be our Ruin. This Word which is spoken of a Nation, a People, concerns every one of us personally. We are all Transgressors of God's Law; were shapen in Iniquity, and have been guilty of innumerable actual Sins. And God in His Word speaks against the Sinner, and says, *The Soul that sinneth it shall die*, Ezek. 18. 4. Yea, assureth us that the *Wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment*, Mat. 25. 46. And that our Lord Jesus should be reveal'd from heaven with his mighty Angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not

God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 Thes. 1. 7, 8. Now the Doctrine of Repentance is a great Gospel Command. Our Lord Himself, the great Prophet of His Church, began His publick Ministry with Preaching this Doctrine, Mar. 4. 17. *From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* The Apostle Peter preach'd this Doctrine to the Jews, Act. 2. 38. And the Apostle Paul informs us that he testified to the Jews and Greeks Repentance towards God, Act. 20. 21. He declar'd that this was their duty, and urg'd it not only upon the Jews, but also upon the Greeks; i. e. the Gentiles. This Command is publish'd to all that live within the Sound of the Gospel, Act. 17. 30. *God now commandeth all men every where to Repent.* And the Gospel gives us encouragement to attend this Duty, how many and great soever our Sins have been, assuring us that Jesus Christ is come to call, not the Righteous but Sinners to Repentance; that He hath purchased Pardon for all penitent Believers, and is exalted to be a Prince, and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of Sins †. The Word of God also assureth us, that *whoso confesseth & forsaketh his sins,*

shall have mercy, Prov. 28. 13. And that the chief of Sinners have found Mercy, when they have thus besought the Lord, and turned to him, 2 Chron. 23. 12, 13. 1 Tim. 1. 13, — 16. Let us then be encouraged to ask of God His Holy Spirit to work this and all other Graces in us; Let each of us smite on our own Breasts and say, What have I done? Let us offer to God that humble Request, Lord, be merciful to me a Sinner. Let us be sensible of the Plague of our own Hearts, and bitterly bewail the dishonour we have done to God, and the wrong we have done our own Souls by our Sins: Let us abhor our selves upon the account of our Sins, and turn from them in inward hatred and aversion. For, a broken and a contrite heart God will not despise†. Let us return to the Lord as to our God, with holy Resolutions to cleave to Him, and walk in His Commandments. Let us look unto Jesus, and by Faith rely upon Him to heal and cleanse our Souls, whose Blood purgeth the Conscience from dead Works, and cleanseth from all Sin; Hebr. 9. 14: 1 Job. 1. 7. Thus we shall be of those blessed ones whose transgressions are forgiven, whose Sins are covered, and to whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity.

† Psal. 51. 17.

Psal. 32. 5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.

4. THE last Use may be of *Consolation to the Penitent*. Be you Comforted: God will repent of the Evil, and not bring it upon you: His anger is turned away, and He will Comfort you. *For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones. For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made,* *Isai. 57. 15, 16.* There's Joy in Heaven over such, and God will give them the joy of His Salvation. Sometimes God sets a mark upon 'em, when He is coming out against a sinful People in destroying Judgments, and spareth them in His great Mercy, *Ezek. 9.* And if they are at any time cast into the Furnace, the Son of God will be present with them, so that they shall not be consumed, but come forth as Gold out of the Fire. You that truly Repent, do also trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall find Rest to your Souls in Him, whom God hath sent to heal the broken-
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a Penitent People

Ken hearted, Luk. 4. 18. He hath purchased the Consolations of the Spirit for such as you, and knows how to speak a Word in Season to your weary Souls. And He will speak Peace to His People : But O take heed then, and do not turn again to folly ! To Conclude ; Blessed are they who thus mourn ; for they shall be Comforted : God will give to these Mourners in Zion the Oyl of Joy for Mourning, the Garment of Praise for the spirit of Heaviness ; Isai. 61. 3. And in due time He will present them faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

T H E E N D.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THERE is now in the Press, and will quickly be Published, A Sermon from *Luke XI. 13.* By the same Author, Entitled, *GOD will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him.* Preach'd on a Day of Prayer, set apart for Imploring the Great Blessing, of the Pouring out of the Spirit on the Rising Generation.

In a few Days will be Published Mr Prince's Two Sermons on the *Earthquake*, The Second Edition, with some Entertaining Enlargements.

There is also in the Press Four Sermons, By the Rev. Mr. Gookin of *Hampton*, Occasioned by the *Earthquake*, with an Historical Account of it as it was in that Town. Also some Remarkable Preservation from Lightning there in the Summer past. Sold by *D. Henchman* at the Corner Shop, in *Cornhill*.

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